

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the real issue is, I believe, my Republican colleagues have lost their way to school. Rather than filling up the Labor-HHS bill with all kinds of distracting issues dealing with education, they do not realize that our children are in crumbling schools, our children are in schools that are overcrowded.

School enrollment in the United States last year broke the all time high record set by baby boomers in 1971 and has continued to grow. A new Department of Education report found more than 52 million children enrolled in our schools, and yet Republicans rejected the idea of Democrats that wanted to infuse infrastructure money into our communities so that we could rebuild our schools.

Do my colleagues realize that our schools in America need extensive repair, that our children are being threatened by peeling paint, falling ceiling tiles, and crumbling walls? Our Republican friends will mess up the Labor-HHS bill and fill it with all kinds of amendments that are not relevant to providing protection for our children.

Yes, our Republican friends have lost their way to school. We, the Democrats, will find our way, continue to support public education, provide for moneys to improve and encourage our children to learn the right way, the safe way, and rebuild the falling infrastructure in our public schools. That is finding our way to schools in America and that is the side Democrats will be on.

LIMIT USE OF TAX DOLLARS FOR FREE NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

(Mr. COBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COBURN. Mr. Speaker, coming before us today is a bill that has an allowable thing for the Secretary of Health and Human Services to control, and it is called free needle exchange programs.

The reason I am up here talking about it is we know a whole lot about how to help people succeed. Our Government is getting ready to spend our tax dollars to help people fail by enabling drug addicts to have needles available to them, to violate the law, to use our tax dollars to have clean needles.

There have been two studies in North America on this subject. Both of them show there is an increased transmission of HIV associated with free needle exchange programs and that there is an increased usage of drugs. We know that that happens. We know that in alcoholism.

One of the precepts in treating alcoholism today in our country is do not enable the patient to fail by enabling their alcoholism. We need to apply that

same thing when it comes to drug addiction in this country.

I hope that my colleagues will support this limitation on using American tax dollars for free needle exchange.

STOP THE ATTACK ON WORKERS' SAFETY IN THE COUNTRY

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I am amazed at the continuous efforts to cut occupational safety and health, efforts to scale back protection for workers in dangerous, hazardous, and unsafe situations, efforts to take back and turn around those hard-won gains which have only come about as a result of tragedy after tragedy.

I have even heard individuals on the floor of this House talking about taking money from OSHA in order to help disabled children. And surely disabled children need all of the help that we can give them, but why run the risk of injuring, maiming, or even killing workers in order to help children?

I say let us stop the attack on workers' safety in this country.

SOCIAL SECURITY WILL BE SHORT OF FUNDS AS EARLY AS 2005

(Mr. SMITH of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about what I consider one mistake in our balanced budget agreement. I would start by asking the question: What tax has this Government increased 36 times since 1971? The answer is the Social Security tax.

More often than once a year we have been increasing the Social Security tax on American workers. It needs explanation. When Congress enacted the Social Security law in 1935, it was financed by a pay-as-you-go program, where existing workers pay in their tax to support the benefits of existing retirees. It has always been so. As there are fewer and fewer workers contributing their taxes to more and more retirees, Social Security keeps running short of money, and the tax is increased. It is not a sustainable program. That is why it is a mistake for this Congress, for this Government, for this President not to start working on long-term solutions for Social Security.

Dorcas Hardy, a former Commissioner, says we are going to be short again of enough money coming in from those workers as early as 2005. Last year I introduced the Social Security Solvency Act that holds seniors harmless and does not increase taxes on workers. The Social Security Administration predicts that the legislation would keep the System solvent for at least the next 75 years. Let us do something about it Social Security.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD PARTNER WITH STATE AND LOCAL SCHOOLS TO SOLVE EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS

(Mr. GREEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GREEN. Mr. Speaker, there are 52 million students in public schools today. Fifty-two million students. That is more than at the height of the baby boom generation. The question is are these students receiving the best education?

Students from kindergarten to high school need a positive learning environment, an environment where students can ask questions, and teachers are accessible for individual tutoring, where students and teachers want to teach and want to learn. Students are not receiving enough help and enough support to learn at an adequate level.

This is not the fault of the teachers. Look at the numbers. Fifty-two million students. There is a serious overcrowding problem. Schools are overcrowded, the buildings are unsafe. Thousands of students across our Nation go to school in buildings with leaky roofs and broken windows while students in the District of Columbia here wait until the roofs are fixed to start school.

Teachers are stretched to their limits. In some classrooms teachers are teaching more than 40 students. We need more teachers and more help for teachers. Teachers provide that personal contact and that mentorship. With an increase in teachers, they can accurately assess the needs of their students and focus on that learning.

These are concerns affecting children every day. We need to partner with our local schools and our States to make sure we solve our educational problems.

LOW-DOSE IRRADIATION FOR RED MEAT

(Mr. GANSKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about something important to the health of our citizens. In 1994, the Food and Drug Administration was asked to approve the use of low-dose irradiation for red meat. Irradiation kills bacteria like E. coli. It could prevent meat recalls and public scares like that we witnessed for Hudson Beef last month.

Statutorily, the FDA had 180 days to act on this petition. To date, they have failed to do so.

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Mr. Speaker, I have a personal interest in this. As a physician, I know that low-dose irradiation is safe and it could prevent a lot of illness relating to ground beef. I also was sick from food poisoning last summer and I can tell Members that had I been